

Title: Interview with Liz Wallace

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Interviewer(s): Paige Cohen and Sam Gundlach

Interviewee: Liz Wallace

Introduction: Liz Wallace moved to Crisfield to be closer to her grandchildren in 2008. She fell in love with Crisfield and has stayed there ever since. She talks about how Crisfield is easy to fall in love with, most things you need are close by, and if you are in the right area and are older, the town is fantastic. She hopes for the town's full comeback; however, she feels like there needs to be a mentality change for the older generation who are content with the way things are now for change to occur.

[Transcription begins]

Paige Cohen (Cohen): Here I go. All right, it is Friday, April 18th, at 12:27. We are at the SU library. My name is Paige.

Sam Gundlach (Gundlach): My name is Sam.

Liz Wallace (Wallace): My name's Liz.

Cohen: And can you say your last name as well?

Wallace: Wallace.

Cohen: Wallace. Okay. And let's get started. So, we're going to start with a little bit of basic background. The first is how long have you lived in the Crisfield area and you were born there, correct?

Wallace: Oh, no. Oh, no, I'm from Pennsylvania.

Paige Oh, okay, well.

Wallace: Quite a while.

Cohen: Okay, well then, how long have you lived there?

Wallace: I've lived there since 2008.

Cohen: Okay. And how's it been? What keeps you in Crisfield?

Wallace: I love it there, it's for my- for this point in my life it's perfect, because it's a small town which I like but I'm right in town so everything is so convenient, you know. I have a grocery store like six blocks away, the drugstore is the same, it's just everything that I need is just, you know, right there.

Cohen: What- what brought you to Crisfield?

Wallace: My son moved to Crisfield, my son and his wife moved to Crisfield, and I didn't want to be far away from my grandchildren. So that's why I moved down there, to be close to my grandchildren. Excuse me.

Cohen: Now let's head to the next question is what are some of your most cherished memories of Crisfield?

Wallace: Probably, trying to think. It's just being there. I just it's- it's just for me it's like I say it's perfect. Most of the- I guess the cherished memories would be when my grandchildren were young and they were down there and we used to do things together. It's- I've been to some different, I don't know how to explain it, there. There's a man that lived down there that would do little speeches on the history of Crisfield and they were really interesting. And so I went to a lot of those and, you know, he did church tours at Christmas time and just things like that.

Cohen: What types of things did you do with your grandchildren?

Wallace: We just, you know, rode bikes together and just, you know, got ice cream. Just you know, grandmother, grandchildren, things.

Gundlach: Yeah, what is, like, the role of family life in Crisfield, do you think? [pauses]

Wallace: Can you elaborate a little bit more on that?

Gundlach: Yeah, so how do you think family life is important in Crisfield to the people in the community?

Wallace: Well, being a small community, I guess, you know, most people know each other. You know, it's- when you have those small communities, most of the people grow up together, and so it's kind of a continuity thing. It's not that way for me because I'm not from there, but there's a lot of- of community within the people that are from there. Does that make sense?

Cohen: How has it been, I've heard from others, that it can be challenging for people who move to Crisfield, where they may not be incorporated into the community as well. Have you faced anything like that?

Wallace: To a certain degree, but I don't really go out a lot. So, it doesn't really affect me that much. I get along very well with my neighbors, all the people on the street. We all, you know, we were friendly and the people that- that aren't, I just, you know, don't go around.

Cohen: Now, nowadays, how do you entertain yourself in Crisfield?

Wallace: How do I?

Cohen: Yeah.

Wallace: I guess this is not a question that you, an answer that you guys are looking for, but I really don't do that much. I work and come go home. And it's just like, that's my haven, you know. I talk to my neighbors once in a while, but I don't really do too much because I- I don't like to do things by myself and where I'm by myself. I just, you know, Susie and I, we'll go out to lunch or something sometimes. There's a little place down there called Gordon's and it's a dive, but they have the best cheeseburgers. So, we'll go there once in a while and get something to eat. And the man that his family owns it is my mailman as well. So, you know, he's there. We kind of banter back and forth and have a good time. But other than that, I really don't do that much.

Cohen: Have you attended any of the community events that happened in Crisfield?

Wallace: I've been to a few town meetings trying to think. If you tell me, there's a church down there that I went to. I've, yeah, they were, there was a time when they were trying to put a manure facility, I guess, chicken manure for lack of a better word, facility down there in the Carvel Hall building, and I went to those. But not- not recently. I haven't been to anything recently.

Gundlach: What kind of people did you see at the town halls that you attended?

Wallace: It was a mixture of, you know, come-heres and from-heres. You know, they were all different, you know, people, different backgrounds. There's one lady there that's really big into politics, and she was there. She gets into all that stuff. Mostly, I was there to observe just to see what people's feelings were about it. And we were allowed to talk about it if we wanted to, you know. Anyone that wanted to talk about it had a chance. I've been to some meetings at the town hall regarding, there's like a hotel motel, I guess, that's kind of behind my property and they were trying to figure out what they were going to do with that, you know, that, you know, mostly what I was involved in.

Gundlach: Okay, what role does the waterfront or the Chesapeake Bay play in recreation and social life for the community?

Wallace: I think it's quite a bit. They have a- they have a boat that goes from there to Smith Island, you know, cruises. There's a nice state park, Janes Island State Park, which is really big down there because, you know, a lot of people camp there. It's beautiful down there. It's right on the water and it just- it just stretches for a long, pretty good ways, I don't know how far it is. There are a lot people that take their boats down there. And of course the water watermen, you know, that- that crab, a lot of those, but yeah, it is, it seems to be pretty important.

Cohen: And is it important for you personally?

Wallace: No, no. I just work up here so. The only thing about the water for me is to go down there to the- to the dock, you know, at the end of town and watch the sunsets. They have the most beautiful sunsets in Crisfield. I always say they're the prettiest ones I've ever seen and I guess they're same everywhere, but for me they are gorgeous.

Gundlach: Yeah, we've had some- some other interviewees who have said the same thing about the sunset. It's- it's the best they've ever seen.

Wallace: They're just incredible and then sometimes- sometimes we'll have some really pretty sunrises too.

Cohen: Over the water, I'm sure you can't beat it.

Wallace: It's beautiful. It's just beautiful down there.

Cohen: Now have you, this is a little bit of personal- personal opinion here, do you have, sorry. Have you noticed changes, oh my gosh, I am all over the place? Have you notice changes in the land weather or water or flooding in Crisfield?

Wallace: I have, I bought my house, the house I have now, I bought that right at the end of 2015. And the people that owned my house before me had built the property up. So, my- my property sits probably, I'm going to say a good six inches above my neighbors. And when I first bought the house, it didn't matter how much it rained, I never had any puddles lying in my yard. But the last two or three years, I noticed that there were some developing. So, I had somebody come in and fill them for me. But yeah, I mean, you can see it, it just, it changes. You know, it's probably, well, with it being right on the water. I'm assuming that you know, the ground next to the water is saturated and then it just keeps, you know, coming in. So, but yeah, I have noticed changes.

Cohen: How has that affected your daily life?

Wallace: It hasn't affected my daily life other than I had to have those low spots filled in.

Gundlach: Have they impacted your ability to acquire food in any way?

Wallace: No, no.

Cohen: Not no impacts with transportation, anything like that?

Wallace: Well, the block that I live in, this is really funny, the block that I live in doesn't flood as much as, now, I live, okay, there's a- there's an intersection, okay? This is Myrtle Street, this Columbia Avenue. There's a house here and then there's me. Now this intersection will flood, and I mean, it's not real deep, but it looks bad. It's probably maybe three inches, three, four inches deep when it- when the tide comes in or if it rains a lot. But my part of the- of the- it doesn't flood unless it gets really, really bad. It'll flood all around, all around, you know, down this way, over by the high school and all up here, but it doesn't flood right in front of my house. Isn't that amazing? That's great. We've only had it, I've only seen it flood really bad one time, and I think it's been about three years ago we had that really, really high tide and it came up into my yard just to the first step. But my house sits up high, so I don't worry about it.

Gundlach: Do you think that your street is on a bit of higher ground than the surrounding areas and that's why it doesn't flood?

Wallace: It must be. It doesn't seem, it doesn't look like it is, but I don't know, maybe Myrtle Street takes it all in. I call it Lake- Lake Myrtle Street because it floods all the time, but. I don't, it must be a little bit higher there.

Cohen: When flooding events do occur, do you personally prepare for them in any way?

Wallace: Well, the only thing I really do is just tell my neighbors if they want to park in my driveway, they can, because mine sits higher than everybody else's. So, I say whoever can get in there first can be there.

Gundlach: Yeah, we've heard that a lot of people go to Food Lion and buy like a bunch of groceries in bulk before a big flooding event. Have you seen a lot that happen?

Wallace: I see it, but I really don't do it because I always have enough food. You know, I don't really eat a whole lot. Looks like I do, but no, I always have food available, so I really don't do that. Now, I'm used to that from being up north further. Anytime they would call for snow, everybody would run out and buy milk and bread and eggs. You know, I said the first thing they do is make when they see the first snowflake or the first rainfall, they start making French toast. No, I don't. I don't really do that.

Cohen: Are there any storms or flooding events that you remember most vividly?

Wallace: Well, I remember we had three snow falls this year, which was really unusual, because we don't usually get much snow down- down here, especially in Crisfield. There was that one time that I was just telling you about that one really, really high tide we got. And I mean, you could just stand there and watch it rolling down the street. It was really coming in. And it got really deep. Let's see, storms. Try and think. We've had a few really good thunderstorms, but they, I love a thunderstorm. I do. Sandy, I remember Sandy. Yeah, that really tore the town up. It was bad. I was down there for that and yeah it really it flooded the street. I remember my grandson was- he was all excited. He's running back and forth. He had a friend that lived down neck, what they call down neck, and he would keep going down there to see if he was okay and he's driving around in this and the water was coming in his truck, but he would, he- he came up to my house when it first came in really bad. He said, "Nanny, Nanny! The water's coming down the street!" I said it is not, because it never did come down there. That was when I lived like six houses down the street. And I walked out, and you could just see this water just rolling down the street. And it started out, there were toys. You could see these toys going down the streets. Then there were like bins and things. Then it turned into drums, you know, like 55 gallons. And then a boat came down the street. That was amazing. And he was out there, he said, "I gotta go get this boat because it's gonna run into somebody's car," so he's out there in the water's up to his knees trying to get this boat to go away, you know, so it wouldn't hit somebody's car. And yeah, it was a mess. It- it was a mess. We had a lot of people. I guess Susie told you about her house. Yeah, it really didn't affect mine, but the rain did. The rain that came with it did because I had a leak in my roof that developed- a leak in my roof and it was just, you know. But the- the tide water didn't affect my house.

Cohen: That's incredible.

Wallace: Yeah, it- it was a mess, I'll tell you.

Cohen: We heard some devastating stories. I'm really glad that you weren't severely impacted by it.

Wallace: No, it wasn't just like I say just the rain impacted me more than anything, because we had a lot of rain too.

Gundlach: So, how are people warned of flood events prior to them happening? Is there a system?

Wallace: There is a system that I don't know what it's called, Code Red or something like that. It's a thing that comes on my phone that will let us know if it's going to be a really bad storm or a real high tide. And then they also put up barriers on the streets that flood. You know, they'll- they'll come around with either cones, not cones, because they would go away. But those, you know, like sawhorse things, you- I think they do a good job of it, you know.

Cohen: Do you feel that our changing climate is something that's being discussed in Crisfield?

Wallace: I don't know about changing climate, just mostly the flooding. I don't, I don't hear anyone talking about the changing climate. To me, since I've been down there, the weather's pretty much stayed the same. You know, just hot as hell in the summer, humid, and a lot of rain in February, March, April, and then it's dry in the summer. It's just, not always- just the way it always has been. And I lived on Deal Island before, and it's the same there, too. I guess it's proximity of being out in the bay, maybe that's what it is, because we won't get any rain all summer, usually. I haven't seen a change in it personally.

Cohen: What are, do you, would you like for those conversations to be implemented or are you okay with the way that things are?

Wallace: Concerning what? Climate change or the flooding?

Cohen: Yeah, yeah, climate change.

Wallace: If it's something that people feel, you know, the need- the need to talk about I guess I like to say personally I don't see any difference. It may be different from 50 years ago or so 60 years ago, but I mean if people feel that it's important, by all means.

Gundlach: Do you feel that people are kind of apprehensive to the subject of climate change? Are they like, skirting around it or do they just not discuss it for other reasons?

Wallace: I think their main concern down there is the flooding. Because it just sits there on the water and I mean, you know, you also have to understand that part of the downtown area is built on oyster shells. So, it wasn't always as big as it is now and it's probably going to be smaller. So, I mean to me, to me personally, the flooding is the most, is the biggest concern rather than the climate change. Unless the flooding has something to do with climate change, but I don't think it does. I mean, personally, I don't think it's always been that way.

Cohen: Have you participated in any community events surrounding the issue of flooding?

Wallace: No, I haven't. And it's not that I don't care. It's just, I guess it's that it doesn't affect me, so it doesn't really, you know, it's not really important to me. That's sounds bad, but it's, you know, it's- it's- it is what it is. It's Crisfield.

Cohen: We want your honest opinion.

Wallace: Well, yeah, I was going to say, I mean, it's Crisfield, and I didn't expect anything less when I moved there. I mean I knew where I was going, I knew what was there. I love it there, you know, and I'm going to stay there regardless of what happens.

Gundlach: So, have you seen, like, any projects or events regarding flooding that the city has been implementing or people are- are doing?

Wallace: Well, I understand that they were supposed to get a really big grant from FEMA to deal- to deal with that. They were supposed put up some, I don't know what they're called, floodgates or something like that and do something about the drainage and all that was supposed to be starting next year. But now whether, I don't know, I've read something very quickly either online or in a paper or something that FEMA has pulled it. Now I don't know whether they have or not. I can't imagine that they would have, but we'll see.

Cohen: I've heard that in our political climate, I think there's a lot of grants that are being pulled that relate to- that relate to climate change and things like that that may be- may be related to that. I remember there was another person who were interviewing who was discussing that well but I- I wouldn't know for sure.

Wallace: Well, I can't imagine that that would be considered climate change because it's- it's a tidal, its tide, you know, is mostly what it is. Tide and the storms when we get them, but mostly the tide. So, I mean, I guess we'll see, you know, we'll- we'll see what happens. Maybe if they did pull it, they'll go back, you know, maybe it's. I don't know how they work; I don't know that much about the government, but maybe they pulled it to and then okay, we're going to pull this and then we're gonna check into it and see maybe, you know. I hope they do something. I mean, because, you know, a lot of people are really worried about the flooding.

Cohen: Crisfield needs the money. I hope they get it too.

Wallace: They do, they do.

Cohen: Have you or anyone you know had to make any major repairs to your, well I know you didn't, you probably didn't have to, but any neighbors or friends, have they had to make any repairs because of the flooding?

Wallace: Well, or Susie, you know. Whoever bought the house that I had before had to get the roof fixed. But like I said, that wasn't the flooding. That doesn't even apply. I'm trying to think if anybody else that I know. There are a lot of people down there that had to have their houses rebuilt or, you know, raised up because of the flooding, but I don't really know a lot the- the natives. So, I mean, I know what's happening, I see what's happening, but I really don't know the people personally, so. I know that there have been quite a few that have had to have new houses built that the Mennonites, you know, built and now they're still in the process of raising some houses down there. Done quite a few.

Cohen: What are your thoughts on relocation? I know that's. Yeah, I know a lot of people in Crisfield are considering it or have some big thoughts on that.

Wallace: This is embarrassing for me to say, but it's the truth. I find it kind of exciting, because I don't do much. To me, it's just like, wow, look at that, you know. I'm going to be one of those people, if a- if a big storm comes running through, I'll be going, look at it. It'll take me right with it. I love Crisfield. I love living there and like I say, my house sits way up, so I don't have that to worry about. I didn't even- I got a personal loan when I bought my house and they didn't even make me get flood insurance, because if my house is gone, everything is gone. I mean, my house sits up off the ground eight, at least eight steps. So that doesn't bother me in the least. I'm not going anywhere. I love it there. Like I said, I'm there. I'm just there for the long haul, however long that may be. [pauses]

Gundlach: What resources do people typically lean on when they're repairing their house or dealing with the damage?

Wallace: Well, the people that had their houses rebuilt, the Mennonite- that Mennonite group came in and built the houses for them. They got the insurance money and then they built the houses. We have Bayside down there, it's like a what you call a lumber yard, and they buy a lot of their things. They buy a lot of stuff there. There are a lot of people down there that do that kind of work. You know, so they probably hire a lot of those when I need something done to my house. And it's not flood related, but I try to find someone local, you know, try to keep the- keep my business local. There are, like I say, a lot of people that do construction and, you know, fixing houses, re- what's the word, re- you know, when you get your house, something done to your house.

Cohen: Renovation.

Wallace: Renovations. Thank you, thank you. Yeah.

Gundlach: So, you said that your home was lifted, and a lot of the homes are lifted. What are some of the challenges you've found with being like, living in a raised home?

Wallace: Well, my house was built like that. It's from 1921, it's an old house. The only, I don't have any problem with it whatsoever. I mean, maybe when I get a little older, I might not want to go up and down the steps and I'll just stay in the house then. No, I have no problem with any of that.

Cohen: Do you think that the younger generation is gonna stay in Crisfield?

Wallace: Personally, no, I don't. Some of them will, maybe, you know, probably some of the- the young men that may go out on the water with their fathers, you know, and take that up. There are some things that they can get into down there. I know the young man that lives down the street from me. He went to school with my youngest grandson, and he ended up getting the job with the town. So that was nice. And there are- there are quite a few down there that stay, but for

the most part, I think a lot of them will probably leave. It's just one of those towns. It's an old town. It's- it's remote. And, I mean, in my experience over the years, I see these remote towns, it's like, you know, people just kind of gravitate away from them because there's more to do. It's like here, it's more doing Salisbury or more jobs in Salisbury and they don't want to do all that traveling all the time, so they just move out. And I know when I lived, and this may not have anything to do with our conversation here, but when I live in the Deal Island, there were quite a few people there. Now, there are hardly any. It's just- it's just one of those remote places that people just don't want to be anymore. You know, you don't have the entertainment that you have up here. You don't have the shopping that you have, it's- and, you know, younger people seem to want to get where the action is. And there really isn't a lot of action in Crisfield.

Cohen: Do you think that that's something that people just need to accept or do you think that's just something that you hope will change?

Wallace: Well, it's- it's a weird- it's a weird frame of mind down there for people. We always have someone down there wanting to bring something in. You know, we wanna get this in here. We don't want Crisfield to die. We wanna bring something in that'll get people to come here or stay here. And then whenever they find something, somebody says, okay, let's do this. Then you got all these other people that don't want it. So, it's- it's like a stalemate. Well, we want this, we don't want that. So, it's like nothing's ever gonna change. This, you know, my personal opinion, it's like nothing's ever going to change because every time they want, they find something that you think would- would be beneficial to the town, then everybody gets together and complains about it. So, it just kind of stays the way it is. It's clannish, it's just small. I've lived in small towns all my life and they're all the same. Just like that.

Cohen: Do you think there's a way to fix that?

Wallace: A different frame of mind would probably be the only thing that they could do. You know, that people would- would, people want change, but then they resist it. I don't know how else to explain it. If they could just open up their minds and accept something that they're not sure of, you know, okay, well this may not work, but let's give it a try. but, you know, it would take a lot of convincing for that to ever happen.

Gundlach: If you were to, in a perfect world, be able to just like right now implement a new form of entertainment in Crisfield, what would that be, what kind of establishment would you put in Crisfield?

Wallace: I really don't- I really don't know. That's why I don't get involved in that. I wish I could think of something. Something, probably the best thing would be something for the kids to do, maybe like a skate park for kids that like to- to skateboard. They seem to like to do that or some place that they could- some place that they can gather and keep from getting into trouble, you know, something to inspire them something to, you know, get their juices flowing so that they

would stay out of trouble. There's so much drug abuse down there, I mean, I don't see it personally but, you know, you're reading all the time. I read and hear all the time about these kids that get into drugs because they and they say it's because they don't have anything else to do. So, you know, maybe if they could find something that would be, you know, interest the young kids down there, the youth, because we have plenty of restaurants, you know, we have. I guess. That's probably why you didn't want a whole bunch of old people answering these questions, because I'm content just the way I am, so I'm trying to think of other people and thinking what they would want. But yeah, I think that would be the most important thing, keeping the- the young kids occupied. Give them something to look forward to, you know, something where they could get together and do something, you know, meaningful.

Cohen: Do you have any opinions on how the city, county, or state has handled flooding issues in Crisfield?

Wallace: Well, I think the city's doing the best they can. I mean, you know, it's a very limited budget down there because there aren't that many, you know, I only something like 2,600 people live down there. So, and they don't have a very big tax base. So, I think they're doing the most they can, I have no complaints about the town whatsoever. The only thing I complain about is they quit picking up recycle- recycled stuff, you know, because I used to be really big into that. I think maybe the state could do a little bit more. I don't know about the county, because Somerset County is the poorest county in Maryland. So, they, you know, they're probably, their resources are limited to, I'm sure. Maybe the state can throw in a little and help out. And I really haven't kept up with that. I was mostly, like I say, I heard, you know, about they were supposed to get this big grant with FEMA, so. That's probably, you know, a state or state, okay, well, we're good then, which I'm sure, you know, anybody would feel that way. But, yeah, I think if anyone, the state should maybe do more.

Gundlach: Do you feel that your voice and the voices of the other citizens are being heard by the local and state government?

Wallace: Yeah, I think, I think they, I mean, I'm sure that the state and local governments are well aware of it, you know, of the flooding situation. Of course, there's a lot of flooding in Somerset County, so I guess their resources are spread thin, and I'm- they do the best they can. Yeah, I feel like they do, you know. I feel they listen to the people.

Cohen: What do you think about the mayor? Do you like her?

Wallace: Yeah! She seems to be really trying to do a good job. She's in there, you know, she's really, she seems too really passionate about it. More so, I think more so than what I'd seen when I first moved down there. I think. The person that was the mayor when I first moved down there, it was just like he was- he was just there. I mean maybe he was doing the best he could. I was really just getting my foot in the water, you know, just kind of moved in and was trying to

acclimate myself to the place but- but no. She, Miss Taylor, she seems to be really trying to- to improve things I think to the best of her ability. Yeah.

Gundlach: How has the local economy, particularly industries like fishing, crabbing, and tourism changed over the years?

Wallace: I think there are less people doing it. It's really, really hard work. That work is excruciatingly hard. I can't, I mean, I was out on a boat one time, and that was it for me. But I think that, you know, like I said, a lot of the young people probably won't get into it. It just kind of seems to fade away with each generation a little bit more, you know. But then there are some that, you know, that have done it for generations after generation after generation and they probably will still keep it, keep crabbing and fishing and oystering. Hopefully, it won't go away forever for good, you know, still have some people that are interested in it. But I mean this they want to put so many regulations on them and I think that's, you know, probably a lot of the reasons why the people don't want to do it anymore, there's so many regulations, you know. And even- even if you have fishing parties, if you take fishing parties out, okay, the state or federal government, whichever one it is, is going to tax you a certain amount of money. Like, you could take four people out, they're going to tax you for six because that's how many your boat can hold. You know, it's just, it's really just frustrating for them, I'm sure. They have to count how many bushels of oysters they get; how many bushels crabs they get and how many people work on the boat and how much it's not. It's really overbearing.

Cohen: How are the other businesses doing in Crisfield? Do you think that they're looking good for the future?

Wallace: Well, some of the places are very, you know, that have been there a long time are established and they'll probably be there, you know, unless their owners die. There was a guy that put in a new sub- sub place, he was trying to get a Subway in there and Subway wouldn't approve it so he just started the business on his own and he stayed there for maybe 6-8 months and then he closed up because he said he couldn't run it, he wasn't getting enough business. And I felt so bad because the guy was working on that place for years. But I guess people just, they're not that many people down there that everybody's gonna want to sub every day, you know. So, I guess I was telling you about Gordon's, the little dive down there. That place has been there for 100 years. So, it's gonna probably always be there as long as there's someone in the family to take it over, or else if it falls down first. And I mean, they have some gift stores down there, I don't know, they seem to be doing okay. I mean, they're not closing up or anything. I think if we had more tourism, they would probably do better, but there's only so much that you can go down to Crisfield and see and do. So, you know, it's- it's limited.

Cohen: Do you think that environmental factors are playing a role in their success or lack thereof?

Wallace: The businesses that are down there? I don't know, maybe- maybe the boat yards and all. I don't know. If the people, you know, get away from doing the, you know, the work working on the water, maybe the boat business won't do as well. There are restaurants down there that open and close and open and close. But I don't know. To me, it pretty much stays the same. It doesn't really change much.

Gundlach: You talked about tourism a little bit. There've been talks amongst people about using tourism as a means to help boost the economy and trying to lean into that and get more tourism and more things for people to do in Crisfield. Do you think that that's a good angle to look at and try and boost the economies through that, or do you think they should go a different route?

Wallace: Well Crisfield is actually, there's- there's a lot of history down there, but it's local history. And I mean, there is only a certain amount of people that are gonna be interested in that. I don't really know that tourism would be the answer. Cause like I say, I mean, we have Make Peace down there. That house is probably 300 years old. But I mean you drive down the road and it's a private residence. You drive down a road and you look at it and then you come back. What else is there? I mean they come down to go to Smith Island. There are some historic places down. There's a lot of verbal history. You know, they can, you can tell people about what happened down there, you know, but it's not there anymore. Am I making any sense at all? I mean, the town, when the town was like 150 years ago, that town was a bustling place, but it is not anymore. And I don't know what they could- what they can present, that people would be interested in coming down there for. And it's sad because it's such a- it's such a- it's a delightful little town. It is, it really is, I love it. But, I mean, it is what it is, you know.

Cohen: Are you hopeful for the future of Crisfield?

Wallace: I don't see it changing much, I think maybe, am I hopeful? I think it's probably just going to stay the way it is unless, you know, more people move away. I don't really think that it's ever going to improve. It's- it is what it is. Like I say, it's just this little town that sits out on the bay and it's a beautiful little place. And I hope that it- I hope it stays there, you know, even if in its existing condition, you know, but I don't see that it would ever grow.

Gundlach: Where do you?

Wallace: Oh, sorry.

Cohen: I was going to say, what do you think it'll look like 20 years down the road?

Wallace: Well, I think it's probably gonna flood a little bit more. You know, the land seems to be just kind of gradually, very gradually, it floods a lot more now in places that it didn't used to. So, I see it probably continuing to have that problem if- if they don't get that FEMA grant or something else doesn't come along. I know over there where Susie lives, she lives across the

highway from me. And people over there said that they never used to have flooding over there until they did something, and now I can't remember what it was that she said they did.

Gundlach: I think that they built the condos and.

Wallace: That's probably what it was. Yeah, there's some kind of a drainage or something that they lost out and I know the- the guy that that lived next door to me he- he moved away. But his house, his yard, that- that yard floods something terrible. It looks like they're on a houseboat and he said that they had done something back there at the hotel, I don't know if they blocked off some drain drainage pipes or ditches or something back there, but he said that after that, you know, then it started flooding in his yard really bad. And I'm very fortunate that mine's built up. That's probably why theirs is so low because they get so much flooding, because it doesn't come in my yard, it goes in theirs, you know. But yeah, they- they've screwed things up somehow or other one way or the other so it floods a lot more now than it used to.

Gundlach: What changes would make you more hopeful for the future? You said that you don't anticipate a lot of changes; what changes, what you like to see that would help?

Wallace: Well, again, this goes back to the, like I said, about, you know, having something for the kids to do, I don't really know. I'm not an expert in any of that. I don't know what they could do. I really don't. If there was some way that people would be interested in, like I said before, the, you know, the history of the town. I mean, you wouldn't believe some of the stuff that used to happen down there. And I learned all this from going to those- those talks that this guy, Joe, Joe Paden is his name. They haven't, he'd have these different talks and tell us about the pirates down there and he'd be somebody you would love to talk to because he could tell you everything, I mean, that man knows everything about Crisfield. And if you ever want to get in touch with him, I can get you in touch with him, but they used to have, they had this one place down there. It was called Good Souls Alley. And that's where the ice cream parlor is now. And it's this little short little street that's only about that wide. I don't even know if you, I guess you could get a car through and that's where all the- the drugs, you know, they just have all these brawls down. Shootings and everything, you know, I'll think I don't know that anybody got killed, people used to shoot at each other and everything is you need to talk to that guy because he could tell you some stories, I'll tell you.

Cohen: Oh, we would love to get in touch with him if you have his number.

Wallace: Certainly, I will certainly get you in touch with him. I will next time I'm here Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and I'll try when I get home. I'll remember to get in touch with him and I can either get you his phone number or at least get you a- an email address or something.

Cohen: Unfortunately, we're ending our interviews at the end of the weekend, but maybe we could still get in touch with him for- for the event that we're doing in the future, on May 3rd.

Gundlach: Our presentation on May 3rd.

Cohen: Yeah, we're going to be doing a presentation at the Arts District in Crisfield where we're presenting all of our findings to the community. We'd love for you to be there.

Wallace: I'll tell you what, if you want to get a hold of him really quickly, he's on Facebook. His name is Joe Paden, P-A-D-E-N. Get on Facebook and see if, you know, if he'll respond to you and then you can private message him. That man, like I said, he knows everything about Crisfield. He's a- that man's a dictionary of everything about Crisfield.

Cohen: We will message him.

Wallace: Please do. I mean, because he gives talks and everything, and he's so funny. He's just, he's real animated. He's great. He is. You need to get in touch with him. He can tell you anything you need to know.

Gundlach: So, would you recommend Crisfield as a place to live? Say one of us wanted to move there after graduation. Would you recommend it?

Wallace: Well, it would all depend on- on your feelings of it, I guess. I would recommend it for people my age, without a doubt, because it's so, it's quiet. I live on a really nice, quiet street, and most of the people that live around me are older, you know. If you would like a place that, like I say, is quiet and beautiful, it's- Crisfield's beautiful. I mean there are a lot of empty houses down there and all, but I mean in all, you have to look at it for what it is, you know, everything has its own beauty. There wouldn't be a lot of things for you to do down there, but if you're the type of person that likes solitude and serenity and all, yes, I would highly recommend it. And it's, things are close, you know. You have- you have everything down there with the exception of doctors. I mean we have a little hospital down there that's got an emergency room with a doctor. There are- there is a doctor down there, I'm lying to you, yeah. We don't have dentists. But other than that, I mean it's pretty self-contained. Yeah, I would highly recommend it.

Cohen: What wisdom do you have to share with the future generations? Go any way you want with that question.

Wallace: If you are a person, like I just said, if you love this- if you love the beauty of nature, if you love serenity, if you love to just see these beautiful sunsets. Ask me that again.

Cohen: What wisdom do you have?

Wallace: Wisdom! Enjoy it for what it is, because it's not Salisbury, it's not New York City. It's- it's just its own little beautiful little town. I just love it down there. It has everything that I love, you know, it's just quiet and like I'm just repeating myself, beautiful, beautiful sunsets. And if you like camping, you have Janes Island, it's a really wonderful place. My son camps there a lot

and he just lives up in Westover so it's not that far to go, but it's the serenity, you know, quiet and peaceful. That's really about all.

Cohen: I was going to say, well, thank you. Are there- are there any last thoughts that you have before we end?

Wallace: No, I appreciate the opportunity. I hope I provided something for you.

Gundlach: Yeah, you had some- some great answers and a lot of- a lot of great- great points.

Wallace: Well, good. I was- I was scared I was going to fail.

Cohen: No, no.

Gundlach: There's no failing at it.

Wallace: And I'm not a, you know, like I said.

[Transcript ends]